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Dale Fleming

Pearl Fleming

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THIS WEEK IN 1862

By Dale and Pearl Fleming

JAN. 28-FEB. 3, 1862

In his adjournment message to the legislature Jan. 29, Gov. Pettus assured lawmakers that they had accomplished all that "energy and industry and fidelity could avail." Whatever the session may have lacked, the governor continued, "is due to the short sightedness of human wisdom and the character of the difficulties with which you have had to contend."

Before ending the session, members approved the act to revise and combine the militia and volunteer laws. The state was divided into four military districts, each under a brigadier general elected by popular vote. A major general to supervise the entire system would be chosen in statewide election.

The new law provided for a draft when volunteers did not offer themselves in sufficient number to fill calls for troops. Men subject to draft could hire substitutes if they found it inconvenient to serve in person. Qualifications for substitutes included that they be able bodied, free and not subject to draft themselves. Persons exempted from the draft were members of the legislature, other state and county officers, telegraph operators, railroad agents and tanners.

A companion measure authorized Gov. Pettus to call for 10,000 volunteers for 12 months in service of the state. The governor was given power to transfer volunteers to Confederate service for any part of the one-year enlistment. Men were to go into camp as fast as tents and other equipment could be provided.

Two days later, Jan. 21, Gov. Pettus wrote Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston at Bowling Green of his proclamation to call for 10,000 volunteers. Pettus asked Johnston to furnish provisions for the recruits from the time they arrived in camp. The governor said this would be necessary because the state had already exhausted all its resources. He noted also that the CSA still owed Mississippi on earlier accounts.

LEVY TROOP QUOTAS

Meanwhile the Confederate Congress had voted to levy troop quotas on the states on basis of six percent of white population. Feb. 2 the War Department requested seven additional regiments from Mississippi. The 7,000 new troops would bring the state to its six percent quota. Calls for new regiments to other states included: Alabama, 11; Georgia, 12; and Tennessee 32. The act set a \$50 bounty for each enlistee, with transportation from home to camp to be paid by the government.

In another effort to find guns for the troops, the legislature authorized the sheriff of each county to collect arms from citizens. Each person would be permitted to keep only one firearm. Failure to turn in weapons could be punished by fine of from \$100 to \$600.

Also passed was authority to the Mississippi and Tennessee Railroad to build a branch line from Canton to Greenwood. The new road was to run through Tallahatchie, Carroll, Holmes, Yazoo and Madison counties.

Faith of the state was pledged for issue of \$2,500,000 in treasury notes. To be issued as soon as the governor could arrange for printing on electro-plates, the new notes were to be in denominations from five dollars to \$500.

With a limit of \$300,000 placed on the company, lawmakers granted authority to issue money to New Orleans, Jackson and Great Northern Railroad. This act was based on the same authority as that of Dec. 20, 1861, granting similar rights to other railroads.

Citizens of Lowndes county who paid \$4,661.28 to outfit troops for the Pensacola expedition were remembered by lawmakers Jan. 29. An act authorized payment of money advanced to equip the Columbus Rifles and the Southrons for their movement from Enterprise to Pensacola. Citizens named as having financed the troops were J. H. Billups, Henry B. Whitfield, J. W. Sykes, E. B. Fort and James Blair.

TWO ACTS FOR NEGROES

Two special acts in favor of Negroes were approved on the final day of the legislative meet. Capt. Clarence F. Hamer of the Hamer Rifles in the 18th Infantry received approval to free a slave, David Wooldridge. Hamer sought to reward Wooldridge for gallantry in the Battle of Bull Run. The act also gave Wooldridge the right to remain in the state during good behavior.

The second law permitted the Clark family of Perry county, "free persons of color, to remain and live in said county . . ."

A resolution Jan. 28 declared that women of Mississippi and the Confederacy were entitled to "heartly thanks of every lover of this country for their exertions in behalf of the cause of Southern independence . . ."

Loyal Mississippi women received another boom Jan. 29 when lawmakers legalized a new grounds for divorce. The new code listed as cause for divorce a husband's serving in the United States army or navy, "or from choice residing in any one of the states of the United States in preference to living in one of the Confederate States.

Legislators also commended all volunteers for their services in the war. They recommended that 12-month volunteers offer their enlistments for the remainder of the conflict.

Before going home members of the law body sent two resolutions to the Confederate Congress. In a memorial calling attention to the difference in pay of privates and officers, lawmakers suggested that the Confederacy increase pay of privates to at least \$15 per month.

A second resolution asked the Confederate Congress to prohibit exporting of cotton except in exchange for arms, ammunition and other war necessities. Cotton should not be permitted to leave the country, urged the Mississippians, until goods in exchange had been delivered to Southern ports.

As Maj. Gen. Braxton Bragg recommended transfer of some of the seasoned units from his Department of Alabama and West Florida to places of greater need, he listed five Mississippi regiments and several smaller units in his command. Serving in the Army of Pensacola, according to the Feb. 1 report, were the 5th, 8th, 9th, 10th and 27th regiments. Other troops in this command under Brig. Gen. Sam Jones were from Alabama, Florida, Georgia and Louisiana.

The Army of Mobile, commanded by Brig. Gen. J. M. Withers, was made up largely of Alabama regiments. One battalion and a separate company of Mississippians were also listed at Mobile.

Union forces on Ship Island were estimated at from 8,000 to 10,000 by Gen. Bragg Feb. 1. In spite of presence of this body of enemy and the naval operations in the Gulf, Bragg wrote that he continued to receive supplies from Havana by small vessels, with landings being made at both Mobile and Pensacola. Included in the cargos from Cuba was "a good invoice of some very essential medicines . . ." which had arrived a few days earlier.